SHRI BRAHM DUTT: Madam, the hon. Members have asked three questions. The first is about the reserves. The prognosticated reserves of the Cambay Basin as a whole estimated at 1370 million tonnes. The geological reserves as on 1st January, 1988 are 711.41 million tonnes of oil and 159.18 billion cubic metres of gas. The corresponding balance recoverable reserves are 143.02 million tonnes of oil and 62.11 billion cubic metres of gas. Coming to the number of wells, so far, 65 fields have been discovered in the Cambay Basin. Of them, 36 are oil fields, 20 are oil and gas fields and nine are gas fields. We propose to complete the drilling of 186 exploratory wells during the Seventh Plan. The third question is whether it is Indian or non-Indian. As far as I feel, in this area, Nada area, there was no drilling done by any outside agency. Certainly we will not object to take help from anybody if it is forthcoming.

बाघेला जी ने गुजरात के संबंध में अन्याय के बारे में कहा है, मैं उनसे सहमत नहीं हूं । गुजरात में तो हम बहुत सुविधा दे रहे हैं कई टाउन को भी दे रहे हैं गैस सप्लाई कर रहे हैं (व्यवधान)

श्री शंकर सिंह बाघेला : एक ही टाउन है (व्यवधान)

श्री ब्रह्म दत्त: उसके अलावा दो को और परपोज किया है, उसकी भी रिपोर्ट बन रही है । इसके अलावा एक बात और कहूंगा कि गुजरात में बहुत छोटी-छोटी जगह पर आइसोलेटिड फील्ड्स हैं । हमने यह भी आफर गुजरात को गवर्नमेंट को दिया है कि वहां चाहे वह छोटे पावर प्लांट लगाएं उसके लिए हम देने को तैयार हैं ।

यह जो एम्पलायमेंट की पालिसी है, इसमें तो हम जो तृतीय श्रेणी और चतुर्थ श्रेणी के लोग हैं उनको लोकल एम्पलायमेंट एक्सचेंज से लेते हैं और उसमें भी लैंड रिजर्व को प्राथमिकता देते हैं । लेकिन जितने हमें आदमियों की आवश्यकता होगी उसी के अनुसार इस नीति पर काम किया जाएगा और इसका सख्ती से अमल किया जा रहा है । पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा का पूरा ध्यान रखा जाता है । एक्सीडैन्ट कभी-कभी हुआ है इसका मुझे अफसोस है और अभी हम हाल में गोवा में एन्वायरमेंट आफ सैफ्टी ईस्टीट्यूट की स्थापना करने जा रहे हैं ताकि इसके संबंध में अध्ययन किया जाए, लेकिन हमारा यह प्रयास है कि इस संबंध में जो आधुनिकतम सुविधायें और आधुनिकतम चेष्टा की जा सकती है वह हम करें ।

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chair congratulates the Minister on striking oil. Now, Shri Z. R. Ansari will make a statement regarding the national forest policy.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Revised National Forest Policy

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): Madam, I seek your permission to lay on the Table of the House the revised National Forest Policy.

9 P.M.

The issue of revision of the Forest Policy formulated in 1952 has been under active consideration of the Government for some time. In view of the social, economic and ecological importance of forests, considerable thought has to be given to the multi-farious implications of the Forest Policy. Although the 1952 Forest Policy aimed at forest coverage of one third of the total land area of the country due to various constraints, this could not be attained. Rather, extensive diversion of forest land has taken place for non-forest use. The genetic deversity has also been considerably affected by the destruction of flora and fauna. The Government have increasingly realised the great importance of forests in contributing to the ecological stability of the country. This has necessitated a re-examination of the Forest Policy and giving emphasis to the conservation and ecological aspects.

[Shri Z. R. Ansari]

The salient features of the new Forest Policy are:

Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and restoration of ecological balance.

Conservation of the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests and protecting the vast genetic resources for the benefit of the posterity.

Meeting the basic needs of the people, especially fuelwood, fodder and small timber for the rural and the tribal people.

Maintaining the intrinsic relationship between forests and the tribal and other poor people living in and around forests by protecting their customary rights and concessions on the forests.

The main approach outlined is as follows:

Existing forest land and forests will be fully protected and their productivity will be improved. Emphasis will be given to enhance forests cover on hill slopes and catchment areas of rivers.

In order to conserve biological diversity, a network of sanctuaries, national parks biosphere reserves and other protected areas will be extended and better managed.

The people will be actively involved in programmes of protection, conservation and management of the forests.

We believe that the new Forest Policy will be able to achieve nature conservation and ecological balance at the same time meeting essential requirements of the people. [Placed in Library. *See* No. LT. 7041/88].

SHRI M. A. BABY (Kerala): Thank you, Madam, for permitting me to seek a couple of clarifications. There is no doubt that forests should be preserved in order to maintain ecological and environmental balance and unless we do this, it will have far-reaching negative repercussions on the ecological and environmental balance. At the same time when we think of various developmental projects and when we have to construct new dams for power generation and for irrigation purposes, we have to see how a balance can be maintained, because it is one thing to have a balanced and scientific approach towards maintaining ecology and environment but at the same time we have to differentiate and demarcate ourselves from certain ecological fundamentals, if I call so. For example, in the case of Kerala there was a proposal to construct a dam on Silent Valley. Then certain ecological and environmental questions were raised. I do not want to go into the genuineness or otherwise of the questions. Ultimately that proposal was abandoned and Madam Indira Gandhi had promised that in place of Silent Valley another project, Pooyamkutty, would be given to Kerala considering the acute power problem of the State. But what happened? Now so many problems and questions are raised in relation to Pooyamkutty also, ecological and environmental questions. Now the Kerala State Government has promised that for the summer forests of Pooyamkutty alternative forces will be nurtured and the proposal is lying with the Central Government.

I would like to know what steps the Ministry has taken in relation to the Pooyamkutty project in view of the guarantee given by the Kerala State that alternate forests will be developed. This is the specific question that I would like to ask and I would like to mention that in relation to the other projects also a balanced approach should be there.

SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, there should be 33 per cent of geographical area under forests. But now it has decreased to 23 or 22 per cent. So, there is a need to increase the percentage of area under forests. What are the steps that the Government is taking to indrease the area under forests and is the Central Government giving grants to the State Governments for this purpose?

Secondly, the Social Forestry Scheme has failed. What steps is the Government taking to give a new shape to the Social Forestry Scheme?

DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI (Karnataka) Madam, I have always been asking the Minister as to what would be the policy of the Government with regard to forests which are in private possession. The State Government has laid down certain rules saying that they cannot cut trees and cannot cut for fuel purposes also and so many restrictions have been placed in respect of forests which are in private possession. But these restrictions are not properly given effect to and I hope that the Miniser will consider his aspect.

He has also said that sanctuaries will be built and other facilities will be given to maintain the ecological balance. But I would like to point out one thing. In the Gir forest, the Maldars are staying there and they have proved to be a sort of obstacle to the lions also that are there in that forest. The lions are being poisoned and are being killed by the people. I do not want to say exactly who is doing it. But the tribals who are living are there are doing this and even if they are asked to go out of the forests, they won't go. Under the circumstances, I would like to know how both are going to be protected.

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Madam, as far as the first question is concerned, with regard to the Silent Valley Project which has been stopped because of the intervention of the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi, I would like to say that, because of the fact that diversion of forest areas takes place for some other useful projects—I do not say that they are not useful projects—we have to see that the ecological balance is maintained. There are certain forest areas which cannot be created by man in spite of his best efforts. There are certain genetic reserves and there are certain natural forests which, if once destroyed, it will be impossible for any human being to regenerate. In the latest policy which I have placed before the House, the main purpose is to see how to protect the ecology of the country and also to carry on with the developmental projects and wherever we find that the ecology is not disturbed and the use of the project is more a little diversion of the forest areas is necessary, we scrutinise those projects and clear them. But, wherever we feel that the ecological imbalance which will be created by the clearance of those projects will be much more, then we are not clearing those projects.

As far as the Pooyamkutty project is concerned, we had sought certain information from the State Government. Madam, the difficulty is that when a project is proposed to us, and we find certain lacunae in that, we write back to the State Government or the project authorities or some information and those authorities and the State Governments never bother to send their reply. There is a general impression that because of our fault the project is not being cleared. So this project is one of the projects where we have sought certain clarifications, certain information, and that infomation has yet to be received by our Ministry for taking a decision in that particular case.

As far as Gir forest question is concerned, the policy is to rehabilitate the people living in the areas. We have taken a policy decision to shift those people who are living in the Gir sector of the forests and rehabilitate them in the best possible manner. We have not reduced the target for forest coverage. We have some target of 33 per cent. We want to proceed in that direction, to achieve that target in due course of time.

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY (West Bengal): What is the present coverage?

SHRI Z. R. ANSARI: Madam, there are two things. One is the declared forest area. As far as the tree cover is concerned, it is something more than 19 per cent. And something more than 22 per cent is the total forest area which is the declared forest.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is over. Now, statement by Shri Yadav.